

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/18/2017 01:49 PM

Technical Review

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C170101)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	25	22
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	13
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	18
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	29
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Leveraging Technology		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	97

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Professional Development for Arts Educators - 5: 84.351C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C170101)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

Strengths:

The project targets schools that house large populations of disadvantaged students. The school district has an average percentage rate of 76% for economically disadvantaged students. (pg. 1)

1) The project will address the needs of disadvantaged students by training teachers to deliver a diverse music curriculum, which will address the cultural backgrounds of students, through a common pedagogy used across the participating schools. (pgs. 15, 16)

2) Gaps have been identified as students having limited or no access to arts experiences at school and/or within their communities. Teachers have not had access to professional development that would enable them to work with the highly diverse student populations in the participating schools. (pgs. 12 – 15)

2) The project is intended to reduce the impact of recent funding reductions which have impacted the participating schools to a larger degree than schools in other geographic areas of the district. (pg. 14)

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(2) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

Strengths:

- 1) Recent research (Goopy, 2013, Hallam, 2010) suggests that using the Kodaly approach to music literacy contributes to holistic development in children that is statistically significant. Benefits of this approach include literacy and numeric skills, spatial-temporal reasoning, intelligence and social emotional development. (pg. 18)
- 2) The impact of implementing this approach to music literacy will be the development of music skills, the building of success skills such as attitude and attention, learning sensitivity to others, and the ability to work together. (pg. 20)
- 3) Professional development to learn and implement the Kodaly method will include 96 hours of training including completion of core courses and Kodaly Certification Training over the succeeding years. The Kodaly system offers certifications at three levels of mastery. Years 2, 3, 4 of the grant will involve teachers committing 15 days each year at 6.5 hours per day to complete Kodaly Certification Training. Ten days will be dedicated to Kodaly advancement while the additional 5 days will focus on, African American materials for the music classroom, Latino materials for the music classroom, and Orff instruments in the music classroom. Teachers will also be offered credit for attendance at professional development conferences of the state and national music organizations. (pgs. 21, 22.) This intensity of training over 4 years will enable the shift in instruction and contribute to the success of the project.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not go far enough to address how efforts will be made to recruit underrepresented groups based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

- 3) The narrative does not describe how professional learning communities will contribute to the professional learning of teachers. Absent this information, the reviewer is unable to evaluate the use of professional learning communities in this project.

Reader's Score: **22**

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

- 1) The district Curriculum & Development Officer will provide office oversight of the project (10%). As the leader of the Curriculum and Development Office he will oversee the design and development of the curriculum, teacher training and coaching. The project director will report to him. He will be joined by the current district Fine Arts Director (25%) and a full time Grant Coordinator. (pgs. 43,44)
- 2) Two nationally recognized Kodaly specialists are consultants for the project. They bring a depth of background and training in the Kodaly method for music education including study at the Liszt Academy – Zoltan Kodaly Pedagogical Institute in Budapest, Hungary which represents the very highest level of training in the Kodaly system. (pg. 24)

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not go far enough to address how efforts will be made to recruit underrepresented groups based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. Without additional information regarding “Advertising widely” reviewer is unable to determine if this strategy will be responsive in encouraging applicants from underrepresented groups.

One unknown factor is the hiring of the Grant Coordinator contingent up the award of the grant. This role will have a large impact on the project. A general description of qualifications is provided including management and organizational skills, support for program objectives, strong partnership engagement, and three years or exemplary teaching experience. This is a critical leadership role and this leaves a gap in the leadership team. (pg. 23)

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

1) The management plan includes timelines, responsibilities and milestones clearly defined in a table format. (pgs. 28 – 30) A table includes Major activities, general dates, who is responsible, and milestones to be met throughout the project. The timeline table specifically states as a final milestone that the projects will complete on time and within budget. This table provides a very clear view of how the project will be managed over the course of the project.

2) On page 30 there is a description provided of how the school district will provide for continuous quality improvement by collecting and maintaining accurate and reliable data to inform service delivery. The district will conduct regular assessment of teachers and students and use the results to plan services and respond to the needs of the diverse population of students. (pg. 30)

3) The proposal defines commitments from key personnel (Project Director 10%, Grant Coordinator 100%), including building principals (10%), but also defines more specifically the additional services that will be provided through the central office support staff in the areas of grant support, research and accountability, budgeting, legal, curriculum, and information technology. This support will be instrumental to insure success. (pg. 31) This represents a lot of manpower and experience that will be dedicated to this project.

Weaknesses:

2) The narrative in this section states that “ongoing, regular assessments of participant progress and continuous quality improvement activities will be used to determine progress of the project.” This area could use more specific information about what those assessments involve and how they will be used to inform, or include references to areas in the proposal that further define this continuous improvement process so that “adequacy” can be addressed.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

- 1) The proposal clearly defines objectives/goals/outcomes for the project the methods for collecting the data and the type of data that will be collected and evaluated. The table (pgs. 35 – 39) aligns project goals with data sources and methods for analyzing data using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Numerous data sources are connected to each goal and objective. Goals and objectives are set at a relatively high improvement level. (pgs. 35 – 39)
- 2) The instruments/data sources used to collect data measure specific performance areas that will be used for formative purposes to inform modifications to the project. (pgs. 35 – 39) Data will be collected quarterly and at the end of each year and compared against a baseline set each year of the project. (pg. 40)
- 3) The project evaluation engages strong theory in the use of a non-random selection design and the use of treatment and control groups. (pg. 32) The goals and processes used to measure the results of the project are supported by research. A logic model for the proposed project can be found on pages e80 through e 84.

Weaknesses:

- 2) The table listing outcomes, data instrument, and analytical methods does not specify when data will be collected and analyzed. Objectives state “by the end of the project period.” The heading refers to a “quarterly and end-of-year evaluation,” but it remains unclear as to when formative data will be collected and how it will be used.

Reader's Score: 29

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Leveraging Technology

1. Projects that are designed to leverage technology through one or more of the following:

- (a) Using high-speed Internet access and devices to increase students’ and educators’ access to high-quality accessible digital tools, assessments, and materials, particularly open educational resources.**
- (b) Implementing high-quality, accessible online courses, online learning communities, or online simulations, such as those for which educators could earn professional development credit or continuing education units through digital credentials based on demonstrated mastery of competencies and performance-based outcomes, instead of traditional time-based metrics.**

Strengths:

a,b) The Houston ISD is leveraging technology in many ways to connect students and teachers with high speed internet and resources therein. This includes access to digital tools, materials and open education resources. The district is working with professional learning communities and providing online simulations (videos) of exemplary instruction. Teachers have access to continuing professional learning through the PLCs and the HUB as well as the opportunity to individualize instruction and connect with parents. (pgs. 2 – 9)

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/18/2017 01:49 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/13/2017 10:15 PM

Technical Review

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C170101)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	25	22
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	12
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	17
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	30
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Leveraging Technology		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	96

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Professional Development for Arts Educators - 5: 84.351C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C170101)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

Strengths:

Criteria 1 -The proposed project will be implemented in schools that serve high needs students including rural schools. Houston Independent School District serves over 215,000 students, 76% of whom are designated as economically disadvantaged. The applicant states, "For the proposed project, Houston ISD has identified 57 high-need schools." P. 10. The designated schools are high-poverty schools with student achievement that is lower than the district average. P. 10. Criteria 2 – The applicant notes that there continue to be significant needs for improvement of student achievement in the 57 high need schools. Financial constraints have resulted in lower per pupil expenditures for students in Houston. This has impacted the high-needs schools. Because the district has site based budgeting, there are differences in the funding decisions that have been made at different schools. A result of this has been that different schools have different levels of exposure to the arts and arts integration. P. 15. The proposed project will close the gaps in opportunity for arts instruction and arts integration at the high needs schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(2) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

Strengths:

Criteria 1 – The proposed project will provide training in the Kodaly method. This method has been the subject of significant research and has been shown to have a positive impact on music learning as well as behavior and social emotional learning. In addition, the professional development provided to teachers will include best practices as well as training for multicultural music programming. Participants will do peer teaching. P. 21-22. This is a strong strategy.

Criteria 2 – The extensive professional development provided through the proposed project he is likely to strengthen teachers' musical knowledge and pedagogy. Because the focus of the professional development is directly on teaching methods and strategies, it is likely that teachers will improve in these areas. Intern, students will receive more effective instruction that is likely to lead to increased engagement and musicianship. P. 23

Criteria 3 - The proposed professional development project will provide extensive training that is of sufficient intensity, duration, and quality. Teachers completing the program will receive certification in the Kodaly method. They will study and implement new instructional strategies and techniques and will do peer teaching in which they teach lessons to their peers to develop their skills. P. 23-25. The teachers' level of commitment to the program and the number and duration of the coursework is likely to lead to teachers implementing the new methods.

Weaknesses:

Criteria 3 – Although the proposed project will provide a significant amount of professional development for teachers throughout the certification process, the applicant does not indicate ways in which the applicant will follow up with the participants to ensure continued implementation and growth. In the absence of any strategies for following up with teacher as they continue to implement their new training, the applicant will be unable to encourage and support continued growth in this area.

Reader's Score: 22

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

Criteria 1 – The applicant provides resumes and detailed information about the key personnel. The key project personnel possess extensive expertise and experience with the Kodaly method and music pedagogy. For example, the project director is an experienced music educator who now serves as the head of the district's fine arts department. He possesses both teaching and administrative credentials and experience. P. 23.

Criteria 2 – The project consultants and partners have strong credentials and experience in working with arts professional development. For example, two music professors with particular expertise in the Kodaly method will serve as project consultants and will provide training for participants in the project. P. 24-25. The project consultants are experts in the field.

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant provides information about the district's non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity policy, the applicant does not identify any specific steps that will be taken to encourage individuals from underrepresented groups to apply for the proposed project.

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.
- (2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.
- (3) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

Criteria 1 - The applicant provides a management plan with clear goals, objectives, and timelines for completing project tasks. For example, the applicant states, "By the end of the project period, at least 95% of the participating music educators will demonstrate proficiency in music content knowledge to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), National Standards, and the Pedagogy to effectively teach them, as measured by pre-test and post-test assessments." P. 26. The objectives are clear and measurable. This is likely to assist the applicant with completing the project on time and on budget.

Criteria 2 – The applicant proposes to gather feedback throughout the project. The proposed project includes a plan to collect survey feedback throughout the term of the project. The applicant also proposes to collect information through classroom observations and to use this information to plan for future professional development and improvements to the project. P. 30.

Criteria 3 - The time commitments for the key personnel appear to be sufficient for the scope of the program. In addition to the Project Director devoting 15% of his time to the project, the applicant proposes to hire a Grant Coordinator who will be devoted 100% to the project. P. 31. This allocation of personnel is appropriate and adequate for the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

Criteria 1 – Although the applicant provides a timeline of key activities for the proposed project, the milestones that are identified do not provide enough detail to ensure successful completion of the project. The milestones for teachers do not clearly indicate the expectations for teachers. For example, one of the milestones states, "Teachers begin infusing PD strategies across the curriculum." P. 29. This milestone is vague and does not indicate the expectations for how, to what extent, and how often teachers will infuse the strategies. This information is necessary to determine whether milestones are met throughout the course of the project.

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.
- (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

Criteria 1 – The evaluation plan for the proposed project is clear and detailed. The applicant identifies qualitative and quantitative measures that will be used to evaluate performance for each objective. The instruments and data sources include surveys, observations, checklists, pre and post-tests, and standardized tests in reading and math. P. 37-39. The evaluation methods align appropriately with the applicant's goals and objectives.

Criteria 2 – The methods of evaluation for the proposed project will provide clear feedback that can be used to assess the ongoing implementation of the project. Frequent data analysis along with the district's data analysis protocols will allow the applicant to make decisions about the progress of participants and any needed improvements. P. 40.

Criteria 3 – The proposed project is supported by previous research. The Kodaly method has been shown to increase student engagement and to have a positive impact on student behavior. In addition, the applicant's plans to integrate technology and infuse learning about different cultures throughout the project are supported by research as are the plans to implement professional development to improve teacher's musicianship and pedagogy. P. 45-46.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 30

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference Priority - Leveraging Technology****1. Projects that are designed to leverage technology through one or more of the following:**

(a) Using high-speed Internet access and devices to increase students' and educators' access to high-quality accessible digital tools, assessments, and materials, particularly open educational resources.

(b) Implementing high-quality, accessible online courses, online learning communities, or online simulations, such as those for which educators could earn professional development credit or continuing education units through digital credentials based on demonstrated mastery of competencies and performance-based outcomes, instead of traditional time-based metrics.

Strengths:

The applicant details a clear plan to leverage technology throughout the proposed project. The use of technology is evident with teachers who will be participating in the professional development project. The professional development project will include training in blended learning facilitation. P. 8. Teachers will also share video exemplars and have the opportunity to participate in teacher to teacher virtual conversations to enhance their professional growth. P. 9. In addition, the applicant clearly presents the ways in which the applicant will leverage technology with students during the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/13/2017 10:15 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/19/2017 01:51 PM

Technical Review

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C170101)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	25	25
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	13
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	18
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	30
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Leveraging Technology		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	101

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Professional Development for Arts Educators - 5: 84.351C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C170101)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

Strengths:

1. This grant is focused on serving the needs of disadvantaged individuals by providing access to the Kodaly Method of Music Education in 57 of the elementary schools that are targeted as "high need schools. The applicant provides a thorough description of disadvantaged students to be served, specifically that 50% or more of the student are from low-income families. (e30) and explains that Houston ISD has an ethnic and racial student composition of 62% Hispanic/Latino, 25% African American, 8% White and 4% Asian/Other. Nearly 30% are limited English proficient (LEP), 64% are deemed at risk, 76% economically disadvantaged, 95% are in Title I programs and 8% are students with disabilities (2014-15 school year). (e12)
 2. Gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure or opportunities were clearly defined and include: segregation by income, limited resources available, school and family inability to provide meaningful arts experiences, both in and outside of school. Additionally, the application explains that district (finances) are already stressed, as a result of severe budget cuts due to budget deficits at the state level during the last several years that has decreased total per pupil spending and has decreased funds available for arts education. Finally, the applicant shares that there is inconsistent support of teachers across Houston ISD and this inconsistency also applies to fine arts professional development. (e33 "A major challenge is the tremendous variation, with significant gaps and weakness, of the breadth and depth of arts education, with some schools having very limited, arts-poor education programs..." (e34)
- The applicants provide a comprehensive description of how the project will address these gaps and weaknesses including the provision of professional development in the area of fine arts. (e35)

Weaknesses:

The reviewer found no weaknesses in the proposal.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from

research and effective practice.

(2) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

Strengths:

1. The project reflects up-to date knowledge from research and effective practice by indicating that the proposed project will use the Kodaly method to increase music education. The project describes the Kodaly method as being used all over the world, results in higher standards of music education and provides new and viable solutions to the questions relating to the teaching of music and literacy. "Kodaly training is a methodology for building skills in individual and group singing that, along with specific musical skills, gives children an opportunity....to build...attention, learning and sensitivity to the group and capabilities for working together (Gardner, 2001)" (e37)
2. It is highly likely that the impact of the services provided will "expand opportunities for historically under-represented groups to be exposed to the Kodaly training...for building skills in individual and group singing, along with specific musical skills, gives the children an opportunity to practice and build individual attitudes of attention, learning and sensitivity to the group...capabilities or working together (Gardiner, 2001)." (e39-40)
3. Professional development services provided are of high quality, intensity and duration and have a high likelihood of leading to improvements in practice as it will provide: three levels of training in the highly effective Kodaly method over a three year period of time. Project MUSIICK will provide a minimum of ninety-four hours of research-based professional development in the effective use of teaching techniques and strategies based on the Kodaly concept of music education (e40).

Weaknesses:

The reviewer identified no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

1. Qualifications of key project personnel are a good match for the work of the grant: The director of Houston ISD's new K-12 Fine Arts Department will serve as Project Director; A Grant Coordinator (to be hired) will coordinate the day-to-day operations of the proposed project. This position will require a background in fine arts, with experience in music education with at least three years of exemplary teaching experience are required along with strong organizational skills (e43). The Project Director will report directly to the Curriculum and Development Officer (HISD) on all project activities (e43-44).
2. Qualifications of project consultants are a good match for the work of the grant. Persons identified to provide training in the Kodaly concept of music education have the appropriate backgrounds and are nationally known music educators.

Weaknesses:

Although a blanket diversity statement is included in hiring practices, the applicant did not provide a description of how the new positions for this particular project will be advertised and filled with respect to assuring that there is adequate representation regarding race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability should be included.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

1. The management plan described the goals and objectives clearly, "Goal 1: Increase the emergent musical literacy skills of students, ages 4-14, in at risk environments....Objective 1.1: By the end of the project period, at least 95% of the participating music educators will receive Sustained and intensive professional development (97 hours) in the effective use of teaching techniques and strategies based on the Kodaly concept...as measured by pre-test and post-test assessments and Kodaly Level 1,2, and 3 certifications..." (e46)

The management plan also clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks by including a chart outlining these beginning October, 2017 and ending September 2021 (e48-50).

2. The applicant describes a variety of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the project. The applicant appears committed to collecting and maintaining accurate and reliable data to monitor and evaluate the impact of the project in each phase of implementation. During the planning phase, HISD will determine equity and outcomes to inform service delivery. During the implementation phase, Houston ISD will conduct regular assessments of teachers and students, using the results to plan and implement services that respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of populations..." (e50)

3. Time commitments are clearly stated: "The Project Director (15%), Grant Coordinator (100%) and Campus Principals (10%) will provide direct oversight ...ensure that the participants have access to products...services...are of high quality...project (components) are completed on time and within budget." (e51)

Weaknesses:

1. The reviewer is not able to evaluate if the management plan would provide for tracking of budget expenditures as the chart included had timeline and milestones but did not include how accomplishing milestones within budget would be monitored or tracked.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are

related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

1. The applicant clearly provides objective performance measures related to the outcomes of the project that are both quantitative and qualitative in nature , for example: “The teachers that successfully complete the PD (including 21 hours of classroom observations) will receive Level 1,2, and 3 Kodaly certifications.” (e52) and the project will implement an experimental study design (e53).

2. The methods of evaluation clearly provide for comprehensive performance feedback and routine assessment of progress by data from performance indicators, program implementation indicators, program context indicators, baseline and pre/post data regarding teacher’s knowledge and efficacy regarding music. (e53).

Student data will also be analyzed. “Student performance data will include results from the annual state-mandated STAAR assessment tests in Reading and Math, as well...data in music content knowledge and ability...collected through assessment instruments developed or identified by independent evaluator.” (e54)

Chart of Instrument/Data Sources for each Project Outcome/Objective with Analytical Method is included indicating mixed methods. (e55-e59)

3. The MUSIICK project is based on strong theory identified in two key studies – Nite, et al, 2015 and Howard,-Brown & Martinez, 2012. Key components of the studies:

“music teachers need sound musicianship skills themselves before they can develop them in their students (Nite, et al., 2015. For the proposed project, the scope of the PD, as documented through pre- and post-test assessments will show the teachers demonstrating (strong musicianship skills)...The teachers will improve their musicianship and overall instruction...(Nite, et al., 2015).” (e61)

“the integration of technology and fine arts PD across the curriculum...will augment the teachers’ (and students) overall academic ability, increase higher order thinking skills, and set the foundation for their interest in learning and career opportunities (Howard-Brown & Martinez, 2012)” (e61)

Weaknesses:

The reviewer cited no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 30

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Leveraging Technology

1. Projects that are designed to leverage technology through one or more of the following:

(a) Using high-speed Internet access and devices to increase students’ and educators’ access to high-quality accessible digital tools, assessments, and materials, particularly open educational resources.

(b) Implementing high-quality, accessible online courses, online learning communities, or online simulations, such as those for which educators could earn professional development credit or continuing education units through digital credentials based on demonstrated mastery of competencies and performance-based outcomes, instead of traditional time-based metrics.

Strengths:

a. All teachers and students have access and devices to increase access to high-quality digital tools, assessments and materials, particularly open educational resources. “Each school has tablets and laptops available for use in the classroom. The District’s Wi-Fi capability at all campuses is designed to provide sufficient access for a large number of

devices; many classrooms are fitted with their own wireless access points...Houston ISD has asked all publishers and content providers to deliver their digital instructional materials to all District schools in an Open Standards format so content can open, function and provide assessment results and user data within the District's digital teaching and learning platform known as "The Hub". (e24)

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/19/2017 01:51 PM